

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7804

INFO AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

UNCLAS LISBON 4663

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS SREF PO

SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM GOP FOR REFUGEE RELIEF THROUGH IMMIGRATION

SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED A FORMAL REQUEST FROM GOP ASKING U.S. TO ACCEPT LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES AS IMMIGRANTS OR TEMPORARY RESIDENTS. THIS IS A MATTER OF INTEREST TO SENATOR KENNEDY.
END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED A FORMAL REQUEST FROM THE PORTUGUESE FOREIGN MINISTRY IN THE FORM OF A LETTER TO THE AMBASSADOR SIGNED BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR IMMIGRATION, JOSE SERVULO CORREIA, ASKING THAT SPECIAL CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANTS WHO ARE REFUGEES FROM THE EX-COLONIES IN AFRICA. SINCE AMBASSADOR HAS HAD PREVIOUS TALKS WITH SENATOR KENNEDY ON THIS MATTER, THIS INFORMATION SHOULD BE PASSED TO HIM. A FULL TRANSLATION OF THE LETTER REQUEST FROM CORREIA IS BEING POUCHED.

2. THE LETTER RECITES THE PROBLEMS OF REPATRIATING 800,000 REFUGEES (THE GOP FIGURE) AT A TIME WHEN THE PORTUGUESE ECONOMY IS ALREADY SUFFERING FROM DISLOCATIONS CAUSED BY THE REVOLUTION AND WORLDWIDE DEPRESSION. IT REVIEWS THE HISTORIC IMPORTANCE TO PORTUGAL OF EMIGRATION AS A SAFETY VALVE TO DRAW OFF UNEMPLOYED WORKERS (STATED AS 455,000), BUT OWING TO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC SITUATION, MOST OF THE TRADITIONAL IMMIGRANT-
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USING COUNTRIES HAVE CLOSED THEIR DOORS. THE BURDEN THIS SOCIAL-

ECONOMIC SITUATION PLACES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL IS NOTED, AND AN APPEAL MADE TO THE USG TO

(A) ASSIST IN INCREASING THE NUMBER OF PORTUGUESE WHO QUALIFY FOR IMMIGRATION WITHIN THE 20,000 SINGLE STATE LIMITATION, AND (B) TO ACCEPT ADDITIONAL NUMBERS IN A "TRANSITORY" STATUS.

3. SINCE THE LETTER RECITES DISCUSSIONS WITH GROUPS SUCH AS ECEM, THE MINISTRY IS APPARENTLY AWARE OF THE MESSAGE THAT THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN SENDING FOR SOME TIME, WHICH IS THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SPECIAL RELIEF MEASURES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY USG, BUT THAT A GREAT DEAL MORE CAN BE DONE USING NORMAL IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES. MANY REFUGEES WHO CAN QUALIFY FOR IMMIGRATION UNDER ONE OF THE FAMILY UNIFICATION PREFERENCES HAVE ALREADY DONE SO. IN ORDER TO EXPAND IMMIGRATION, HOWEVER, GREATER USE SHOULD BE MADE OF LABOR CERTIFICATION. BUT TO A LARGE MEASURE, THIS REQUIRES THE INITIATIVE OF THE LUSO-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN LOCATING CERTIFIABLE JOB OFFERS. ALTHOUGH THE POSSIBILITY HAS NOT BEEN MENTIONED TO INQUIRERS HERE, THE SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SPONSORING ALIENS BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES DESCRIBED IN NOTE 15, 22 CFR 42.91(A)(14) WOULD ALSO SEEM APPROPRIATE.

4. EMBASSY AND CONSTITUENT POSTS STAND READY TO ASSIST IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE. AT PRESENT, ALL POSTS ARE EXPEDITING PROCESSING OF REFUGEE CASES, BUT WE HAVE NO AUTHORITY TO DO MORE.
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